

**NOTES FROM THE
MARICOPA ASSOCIATION OF GOVERNMENTS
GRAND AVENUE NORTHWEST CORRIDOR STUDY
AGENCY/ COMMUNITY FORUM**

**July 28, 2000 – 1:30 p.m.
MAG Office, Suite 200, Saguaro Room**

Attendance

Agency Representatives

Jim Book, City of Glendale
Dale Buskirk, ADOT
Mike Bowyer, ADOT/ VPM
Margarita Garcia, Town of Guadalupe
Steve Garza, Mayor of El Mirage
Jim Geades, City of El Mirage/ A-N West
John Hauskins, ADOT/ PMD
Don Herp, City of Phoenix
Kwi-Sung Kang, ADOT
Larry Martinez, City of Goodyear
Dan Nissen, City of Peoria
Ellis Perl, City of Surprise
Eugene Russell, Mayor of Youngtown
Carol Scherbarth, MCDOT
Joan Shafer, Mayor of Surprise

Other Community Representatives

Steve Bowser, Del Webb Corp/ HOA
Phil Garner, PORA Sun City West
Paul Swartz, Sun City HOA
Gerald Unger, Sun City HOA
Paul White, Sun City HOA

Others

Randy Altenhoff, The Wester
Eric Anderson, MAG
Brian Curtis, URS
Angela Dye, A Dye Design
Dave French, URS
Terry Johnson, MAG
Suzanne Quigley, MAG
Ethan Rauch, BRW
Chris Voigt, MAG
Rita Walton, MAG

1. Introductions

Eric Anderson called the meeting to order at 1:30 P.M. The meeting started with a round robin set of introductions.

2. Project Overview

Dave French presented the project team, scope of work and schedule. A list of the project deliverables with completion dates was handed out. Brian Curtis presented issues to be addressed in the corridor study that have been identified to date. Major issues include the various functions of Grand Avenue, the difficulty in crossing Grand Avenue for various modes of travel, aesthetics, development along the corridor, access control, intersection problems, and incomplete street network.

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3. Input from Agency and Other Community Representatives

The meeting participants raised the following issues:

Comment received from MAG include:

- MAG will provide updated official socio-economic forecasts and an alternative socio-economic forecast for the project.
- An Elderly Mobility Workshop is scheduled Friday, August 25, 2000 at MAG from 1:00-3:00 p.m.

Comments received from the City of Surprise include:

- 163rd Avenue does not go anywhere but to Grand and would not serve as a good diversion route. 163rd/ Grand needs a traffic signal.
- An overpass is needed for Boswell Hospital.
- Golf carts and pedestrians crossing Grand are a concern.
- Access in and out of existing and new shopping centers needs to be evaluated.
- Bicycle travel – where should it be allowed, should alternative routes be provided?
- Grand Avenue is the gateway to the metropolitan area; aesthetics are a concern.
- Designation signage is need for West Valley cities.
- No guardrail exists along the drainage channel in Surprise and El Mirage.
- Drainage channel is an eyesore and collects trash.
- Possible underpass at Grand/Bell; does not want overpass.
- Growth in Buckeye and along the Sun Valley Parkway will add to the traffic problems.
- 303/ Grand needs a traffic signal now because of the large number of trucks. Do not wait for construction of the planned overpass.
- Trains often restrict access to the hospitals. Top priority is to eliminate this problem.
- Noise abatement is needed.
- Signage needs to consider elderly population; larger letters, clear directions and concise.
- Bell Road is at capacity; Grand Ave is likely to become a diversion route for Bell Road.
- When will improvements begin? (MAG responded that 5 years would be the earliest, short-term smaller projects might be eligible for money dedicated to safety improvements.)
- Surprise is building the west side of El Mirage Road from Paradise Lane to Greenway. El Mirage is to complete the east side by the end of the year.

Comments received from Sun City Area include:

- El Mirage Road should be extended to the south.
- Pedestrian access across Grand is a concern.
- Railroad blocks access to the hospitals. Improved access is needed to the hospitals at 103rd Avenue, RH Johnson Blvd. and Meeker Blvd.
- 99th, 103rd, 107th intersections are very busy.
- Pedestrian activity at 107th Avenue is heavy due to hospital/ medical offices on the north side and commercial land uses on the south side.
- Concern about MAG Model being up to date. (An alternative socio-economic forecast scenario will be used in the study to supplement the official MAG forecast. MAG will provide both forecast scenarios).

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- Olive Avenue should be improved.
- The railroad may be able to be lowered at cross streets, it has been done in some states according to a former railroad employee.
- Lack of lane continuity is confusing to elderly drivers.
- Any new documents developed by this study should be provided to the local communities.
- Traffic signals need to be synchronized and respond to traffic volumes.
- Keep Sun City designation signs.
- Improved access from Bell Road south to Grand Avenue is needed.

Comments received from Youngtown include:

- Access to hospitals is a concern at 103rd and 107th.
- Fire department uses 111th Avenue for access.
- Business on south side of Grand between 111th and 113th Avenues are important to Youngtown, access to these should be maintained.
- A park and ride lot is needed for eastbound traffic on Grand Ave. going southbound on Loop 101.
- Overpasses are needed but existing access needs to be maintained.

Comments received from Glendale include

- Realize that to construct major improvements will require discomfort for communities during construction. Implementation will be a key consideration when developing possible investment options.
- As the area grows, Grand will likely serve as a diversion route for other arterial streets.
- Bell Road would not serve as a diversion route for Grand Avenue as Bell Road is already congested.
- A study to identify an east/west route in the Northwest Valley may be conducted in the near future by MAG. The selected east/west route from the study could serve as a diversion route for Grand Avenue.
- Project should use a long term forecast so improvements are not at capacity when they open. (MAG responded that year 2025 will be used for traffic forecasts.)
- Transit should be provided along Grand. Bus stop locations are deficient.
- Signage improvements are needed for all local communities.
- Need park and ride lot.

Comments from ADOT include

- The railroad has a big impact on traffic in the area. BNSF should be formally included in the study process.
- Need to look at current and future plans of the railroad and its impacts to traffic.
- This study should evaluate grade separations with the railroad.
- The study could recommend operational improvements for the railroad.

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4a. Call to the public

No one from the public identified themselves as wanting to speak.

4b. Public Involvement Plan

Angela Dye, A Dye Design, presented the components of the public involvement process for the study. Components include a project mailing list, 2 public meetings, participation in the MAG regional public outreach process, and newspaper articles. An invitation for the project team to give outreach presentations to local groups was made. The mailing list from the Grand Avenue Major Investment Study will serve as a starting point for this study mailing list. A copy of the current mailing list was handed out. Agency and community representatives were asked to review the mailing list and provide names of individuals that should be included on the mailing list. Anyone invited to this meeting will be incorporated into the mailing list.

The West Valley Art Museum in Surprise was mentioned as a possible place to hold the public meetings by the agency representatives from Surprise. The first meeting is expected to be held in September before the next forum meeting.

5. Next Steps

The scope of work for the study will be revised as needed to accommodate comments identified during the meeting.

A schedule was handed out showing all tentative meetings as part of the agenda package but it was noted that the second agency/community forum meeting date would likely change.